



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. FAA-2022-0294; Project Identifier MCAI-2021-00550-R]

RIN 2120-AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Helicopters Deutschland GmbH (AHD) Helicopters

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), DOT.

ACTION: Notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM).

SUMMARY: The FAA proposes to adopt a new airworthiness directive (AD) for all Airbus Helicopters Deutschland GmbH (AHD) Model MBB-BK117 A-1, MBB-BK117 A-3, MBB-BK117 A-4, MBB-BK117 B-1, MBB-BK117 B-2, MBB-BK117 C-1, MBB-BK117 C-2, and MBB-BK117 D-2 helicopters. This proposed AD was prompted by the FAA's determination that aging of the elastomeric material of certain tension torsion straps (TT-Straps), during the period since manufacturing date up to first flight on a helicopter, may affect its structural characteristics. This proposed AD would require the replacement of certain TT-Straps, implementation of storage life limits for TT-Straps, a prohibition on installing certain TT-Straps and conditions for installation of certain other TT-Straps, as specified in a European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) AD, which is proposed for incorporation by reference (IBR). The FAA is proposing this AD to address the unsafe condition on these products.

DATES: The FAA must receive comments on this proposed AD by [INSERT DATE 45 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

ADDRESSES: You may send comments, using the procedures found in 14 CFR 11.43 and 11.45, by any of the following methods:

- Federal eRulemaking Portal: Go to <https://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the instructions for submitting comments.
- Fax: (202) 493-2251.

- Mail: U.S. Department of Transportation, Docket Operations, M-30, West Building Ground Floor, Room W12-140, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE, Washington, DC 20590.

- Hand Delivery: Deliver to Mail address above between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.

For EASA material that is proposed for IBR in this AD, contact EASA, Konrad-Adenauer-Ufer 3, 50668 Cologne, Germany; phone: +49 221 8999 000; email: ADs@easa.europa.eu; Internet: www.easa.europa.eu. You may find the EASA material on the EASA website at <https://ad.easa.europa.eu>. You may view this material at the FAA, Office of the Regional Counsel, Southwest Region, 10101 Hillwood Pkwy., Room 6N-321, Fort Worth, TX 76177. For information on the availability of this material at the FAA, call (817) 222-5110. The EASA material is also available at <https://www.regulations.gov> by searching for and locating Docket No. FAA-2022-0294.

Examining the AD Docket

You may examine the AD docket at <https://www.regulations.gov> by searching for and locating Docket No. FAA-2022-0294; or in person at Docket Operations between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays. The AD docket contains this NPRM, the EASA AD, any comments received, and other information. The street address for Docket Operations is listed above.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Kristi Bradley, Program Manager, COS Program Management Section, Operational Safety Branch, Compliance & Airworthiness Division, FAA, 10101 Hillwood Pkwy., Fort Worth, TX 76177; phone: (817) 222-5110; email: kristin.bradley@faa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Comments Invited

The FAA invites you to send any written relevant data, views, or arguments about this proposal. Send your comments to an address listed under ADDRESSES. Include “Docket No. FAA-2022-0294; Project Identifier MCAI-2021-00550-R” at the beginning of your comments. The most helpful comments reference a specific portion of the proposal, explain the reason for any recommended change, and include supporting data.

The FAA will consider all comments received by the closing date and may amend this proposal because of those comments.

Except for Confidential Business Information (CBI) as described in the following paragraph, and other information as described in 14 CFR 11.35, the FAA will post all comments received, without change, to <https://www.regulations.gov>, including any personal information you provide. The agency will also post a report summarizing each substantive verbal contact received about this NPRM.

Confidential Business Information

CBI is commercial or financial information that is both customarily and actually treated as private by its owner. Under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) (5 U.S.C. 552), CBI is exempt from public disclosure. If your comments responsive to this NPRM contain commercial or financial information that is customarily treated as private, that you actually treat as private, and that is relevant or responsive to this NPRM, it is important that you clearly designate the submitted comments as CBI. Please mark each page of your submission containing CBI as “PROPIN.” The FAA will treat such marked submissions as confidential under the FOIA, and they will not be placed in the public docket of this NPRM. Submissions containing CBI should be sent to Kristi Bradley, Program Manager, COS Program Management Section, Operational Safety Branch, Compliance & Airworthiness Division, FAA, 10101 Hillwood Pkwy., Fort Worth, TX 76177; phone: (817) 222-5110; email: kristin.bradley@faa.gov. Any commentary that the FAA receives that is not specifically designated as CBI will be placed in the public docket for this rulemaking.

Background

EASA, which is the Technical Agent for the Member States of the European Union, has issued EASA AD 2021-0122, dated May 6, 2021 (EASA AD 2021-0122), to correct an unsafe condition for all Airbus Helicopters Deutschland GmbH (AHD) (formerly Eurocopter Deutschland GmbH, Eurocopter Hubschrauber GmbH, Messerschmitt-Bölkow-Blohm GmbH; Airbus Helicopters Inc., formerly American Eurocopter LLC) Model MBB-BK117 A-1, MBB-BK117 A-3, MBB-BK117 A-4, MBB-

BK117 B-1, MBB-BK117 B-2, MBB-BK117 C-1, MBB-BK117 C-2, and MBB-BK117 D-2 helicopters.

This proposed AD was prompted by a determination that aging of the elastomeric material of certain TT-Straps, during the period since manufacturing date up to first flight on a helicopter, may affect its structural characteristics. The FAA is proposing this AD to address aging of the elastomeric material of certain TT-Straps, which could lead to premature failure of a TT-Strap, possibly resulting in loss of control of the helicopter. See EASA AD 2021-0122 for additional background information.

Related Service Information Under 1 CFR Part 51

EASA AD 2021-0122 requires the replacement of certain TT-straps, implementation of storage life limits for TT-Straps since cure date, a prohibition on installing certain TT-Straps, and provides conditions for installation of certain other TT-Straps. This material is reasonably available because the interested parties have access to it through their normal course of business or by the means identified in the ADDRESSES section.

FAA's Determination

These helicopters have been approved by EASA and are approved for operation in the United States. Pursuant to the FAA's bilateral agreement with the European Union, EASA has notified the FAA about the unsafe condition described in its AD. The FAA is proposing this AD after evaluating all known relevant information and determining that the unsafe condition described previously is likely to exist or develop on other helicopters of the same type design.

Proposed AD Requirements in this NPRM

This proposed AD would require accomplishing the actions specified in EASA AD 2021-0122, described previously, as incorporated by reference, except for any differences identified as exceptions in the regulatory text of this proposed AD.

Explanation of Required Compliance Information

In the FAA's ongoing efforts to improve the efficiency of the AD process, the FAA developed a process to use some civil aviation authority (CAA) ADs as the primary source of information for compliance with requirements for corresponding FAA ADs.

The FAA has been coordinating this process with manufacturers and CAAs. As a result, the FAA proposes to incorporate EASA AD 2021-0122 by reference in the FAA final rule. This proposed AD would, therefore, require compliance with EASA AD 2021-0122 in its entirety through that incorporation, except for any differences identified as exceptions in the regulatory text of this proposed AD. Using common terms that are the same as the heading of a particular section in EASA AD 2021-0122 does not mean that operators need comply only with that section. For example, where the AD requirement refers to “all required actions and compliance times,” compliance with this AD requirement is not limited to the section titled “Required Action(s) and Compliance Time(s)” in EASA AD 2021-0122. Service information referenced in EASA AD 2021-0122 for compliance will be available at <https://www.regulations.gov> by searching for and locating Docket No. FAA-2022-0294 after the FAA final rule is published.

Costs of Compliance

The FAA estimates that this AD, if adopted as proposed, would affect 213 helicopters of U.S. Registry. Labor rates are estimated at \$85 per work-hour. Based on these numbers, the FAA estimates the following costs to comply with this proposed AD.

Estimated costs

Action	Labor cost	Parts cost	Cost per product	Cost on U.S. operators
Replace the TT-Strap	5 work-hours X \$85 per hour = \$425	\$4,800	\$5,225	\$1,112,925

Authority for this Rulemaking

Title 49 of the United States Code specifies the FAA’s authority to issue rules on aviation safety. Subtitle I, section 106, describes the authority of the FAA Administrator. Subtitle VII: Aviation Programs, describes in more detail the scope of the Agency’s authority.

The FAA is issuing this rulemaking under the authority described in Subtitle VII, Part A, Subpart III, Section 44701: General requirements. Under that section, Congress charges the FAA with promoting safe flight of civil aircraft in air commerce by

prescribing regulations for practices, methods, and procedures the Administrator finds necessary for safety in air commerce. This regulation is within the scope of that authority because it addresses an unsafe condition that is likely to exist or develop on products identified in this rulemaking action.

Regulatory Findings

The FAA determined that this proposed AD would not have federalism implications under Executive Order 13132. This proposed AD would not have a substantial direct effect on the States, on the relationship between the national Government and the States, or on the distribution of power and responsibilities among the various levels of government.

For the reasons discussed above, I certify this proposed regulation:

- (1) Is not a “significant regulatory action” under Executive Order 12866,
- (2) Would not affect intrastate aviation in Alaska, and
- (3) Would not have a significant economic impact, positive or negative, on a substantial number of small entities under the criteria of the Regulatory Flexibility Act.

List of Subjects in 14 CFR Part 39

Air transportation, Aircraft, Aviation safety, Incorporation by reference, Safety.

The Proposed Amendment

Accordingly, under the authority delegated to me by the Administrator, the FAA proposes to amend 14 CFR part 39 as follows:

PART 39 - AIRWORTHINESS DIRECTIVES

- 1. The authority citation for part 39 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 49 U.S.C. 106(g), 40113, 44701.

§ 39.13 [Amended]

- 2. The FAA amends § 39.13 by adding the following new airworthiness directive:

Airbus Helicopters Deutschland GmbH (AHD): Docket No. FAA-2022-0294; Project Identifier MCAI-2021-00550-R.

(a) Comments Due Date

The FAA must receive comments on this airworthiness directive (AD) by [INSERT DATE 45 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

(b) Affected ADs

None.

(c) Applicability

This AD applies to all Airbus Helicopters Deutschland GmbH (AHD) MBB-BK117 A-1, MBB-BK117 A-3, MBB-BK117 A-4, MBB-BK117 B-1, MBB-BK117 B-2, MBB-BK117 C-1, MBB-BK117 C-2, and MBB-BK117 D-2 helicopters, certificated in any category.

(d) Subject

Joint Aircraft Service Component (JASC) Code: 6200, Main Rotor System.

(e) Unsafe Condition

This AD was prompted by the FAA's determination that aging of the elastomeric material of certain tension torsion straps (TT-Straps), during the period since manufacturing date up to first flight on a helicopter, may affect its structural characteristics. The FAA is issuing this AD to address aging of the elastomeric material of certain TT-Straps. The unsafe condition, if not addressed, could result in premature failure of a TT-Strap, possibly resulting in loss of control of the helicopter.

(f) Compliance

Comply with this AD within the compliance times specified, unless already done.

(g) Requirements

Except as specified in paragraph (h) of this AD: Comply with all required actions and compliance times specified in, and in accordance with, European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) AD 2021-0122, dated May 6, 2021 (EASA AD 2021-0122).

(h) Exceptions to EASA AD 2021-0122

(1) Where EASA AD 2021-0122 refers to its effective date, this AD requires using the effective date of this AD.

(2) Where EASA AD 2021-0122 specifies the “cure date” of a TT-Strap, the cure date can be determined using the information provided in the service information specified in EASA AD 2021-0122, or contacting Airbus Helicopters Deutschland GmbH for applicable instructions. If the option of contacting Airbus Helicopters Deutschland GmbH for instructions is chosen, those instructions must be approved by the Manager, General Aviation & Rotorcraft Section, International Validation Branch, FAA; or EASA; or Airbus Helicopters’ EASA Design Organization Approval (DOA). If approved by the DOA, the approval must include the DOA-authorized signature.

(3) This AD does not mandate compliance with the “Remarks” section of EASA AD 2021-0122.

(4) Where the service information referenced in EASA AD 2021-0122 specifies scrapping a part, this AD requires removing that part from service.

(5) Where paragraph (1) of EASA AD 2021-0122 specifies to replace each Lord TT-Strap and Bendix TT-Strap “in accordance with the instructions of the applicable ASB,” for this AD, the replacement must be done using FAA-approved procedures.

(6) Where EASA AD 2021-0122 refers to the airworthiness limitations items of the airworthiness limitations section of the aircraft maintenance manual (AMM) for the definition of service life limit (SLL), this AD requires using the life limits specified in paragraphs (h)(6)(i) through (iii) of this AD, as applicable.

(i) For Bendix TT-Strap P/N 2604067 and P/N 117-14110: Before 10 years or 25,000 flight cycles on the part, whichever occurs first.

(ii) For Lord TT-Strap P/N J17322-1 and P/N 117-14111: Before 12 years or 40,000 flight cycles on the part, whichever occurs first.

(iii) For Lord TT-Strap P/N B622M10T1001: Before 12 years or 30,000 flight cycles on the part, whichever occurs first.

(7) Where table 1 of EASA AD 2021-0122 specifies a compliance time of “During the next helicopter periodical inspection or within 2 months, whichever occurs later after the effective date of this AD, but not exceeding the SLL,” for this AD, the compliance time is “Within 2 months after the effective date of this AD but not exceeding the applicable SLL specified in paragraphs (h)(6)(i) through (iii) of this AD.

(i) Special Flight Permit

Special flight permits, as described in 14 CFR 21.197 and 21.199, are not allowed.

(j) Alternative Methods of Compliance (AMOCs)

(1) The Manager, International Validation Branch, FAA, has the authority to approve AMOCs for this AD, if requested using the procedures found in 14 CFR 39.19. In accordance with 14 CFR 39.19, send your request to your principal inspector or local Flight Standards District Office, as appropriate. If sending information directly to the manager of the International Validation Branch, send it to the attention of the person identified in paragraph (k)(2) of this AD. Information may be emailed to: 9-AVS-AIR-730-AMOC@faa.gov.

(2) Before using any approved AMOC, notify your appropriate principal inspector, or lacking a principal inspector, the manager of the local flight standards district office/certificate holding district office.

(k) Related Information

(1) For EASA AD 2021-0122, contact EASA, Konrad-Adenauer-Ufer 3, 50668 Cologne, Germany; phone: +49 221 8999 000; email: ADs@easa.europa.eu; Internet: www.easa.europa.eu. You may find the EASA material on the EASA website at <https://ad.easa.europa.eu>. You may view this material at the FAA, Office of the Regional Counsel, Southwest Region, 10101 Hillwood Pkwy., Room 6N-321, Fort Worth, TX 76177. For information on the availability of this material at the FAA, call (817) 222-5110. This material may be found in the AD docket at <https://www.regulations.gov> by searching for and locating Docket No. FAA-2022-0294.

(2) For more information about this AD, contact Kristi Bradley, Program Manager, COS Program Management Section, Operational Safety Branch, Compliance & Airworthiness Division, FAA, 10101 Hillwood Pkwy., Fort Worth, TX 76177; phone: (817) 222-5110; email: kristin.bradley@faa.gov.

Issued on March 22, 2022.

Lance T. Gant, Director,
Compliance & Airworthiness Division,
Aircraft Certification Service.

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